

NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF
ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL



DIAGNOSIS OF MEASLES.—Enrico Castelli in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* calls attention to the special sign that "Koplic" in 1896 described as a premonitory symptom of measles. It consists of the presence of grayish-blue patches in the mucous membrane of the cheeks of persons in whom measles will develop in a few days. Such a sign is very useful in the early diagnosis of this disease, especially in adults, where measles is so rarely suspected and where the premonitory symptoms of the disease assume very often a more serious aspect than in children. Koplic, in the observation of many cases of measles, was able to detect frequently the signs spoken of from two to four days before the eruption came out.

INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL LIFE OVER HEALTH.—The same journal has a paper by Frank W. Wright on the influence of school life upon the health of children. He believes in the medical inspection of schools as a means of lessening illness. He thinks the subject should be divided into four parts:

1. Sanitation of the buildings, including the inspection of closets, urinals, heating and ventilating apparatus, lighting and cleanliness of rooms and halls, the water supply and means by which the water is served, and possibly supervision of books, pencils, etc., in regard to neatness, disinfection, and destruction if necessary.

2. Daily examination of pupils for the prevention of contagious diseases, for the detection of vermin and parasitic diseases, and at least once a term to ascertain if all pupils have been successfully vaccinated.

3. The examination of the eyes and ears of each pupil, that errors in refraction and defects in hearing may be corrected and treated.

4. Outside inspection, investigation into cause of absence from school, and if children are found to be ill, the nature of the illness.

INSOMNIA.—The *Interstate Medical Journal* quotes from a foreign exchange an article on the relief of insomnia. After recommending the use of the cold pack, it says: "In many cases, however, the cold pack fails to produce the desired effect, and we may then make use of the prolonged lukewarm or warm bath, which is probably our most efficient means of combating insomnia. The patient is entirely immersed to the neck in water having a temperature of from 92° to 98° F. for from fifteen to thirty minutes. The bath is usually given soon before the patient desires to go to sleep, but may be given several hours earlier provided the patient goes to bed immediately after the bath, or at least remains perfectly quiet."

POTATOES IN DIABETES.—The *Medical Standard* quotes an editorial in the *British Medical Journal* on this subject. It is a review of a communication of

M. Mossé to the French Academy of Medicine, in which he not only recommends potatoes as a substitute for bread in the dietary of diabetic patients, but urges the use of a considerable quantity, as much as two or three pounds being allowed daily. He describes a number of cases which were placed on this diet to show that as compared with an equivalent quantity of bread their use was followed by diminution of the glycosuria, polyuria, and thirst, and marked improvement in the general health. In only one case was the result unfavorable. It is shown that many diabetics can take three thousand grains of starch daily in the form of potatoes without eliminating more than five hundred or six hundred grains of glucose by the urine; that this is not due to defective assimilation is shown by the feces. These cases were mostly of the arthritic (rheumatic) type. Mossé ascribes the benefit of the potato diet to the alkaline salts, especially potassium, contained in the tuber. He does not recommend its indiscriminate use in all cases of diabetes, and says that the urine should be frequently examined.

REMOVING WARTS AND MOLES.—The *International Journal of Surgery* says: "Warts and moles may be removed by touching them daily with glacial acetic acid, which must not be permitted to touch the healthy skin. If this is carefully done, no scar will be left."

ANTIDOTE FOR FORMALDEHYDE.—The *Medical World* thinks that owing to the popularity of formaldehyde as an antiseptic cases of poisoning may arise from its use. The antidote is ammonia well diluted, and aromatic spirits of ammonia is recommended as an ideal form in which to administer it.

SHALL YOUNG CHILDREN BE GIVEN MEAT?—Dr. Joseph E. Winters, of New York, professor of diseases of children in the Cornell University Medical College, speaks very strongly on this subject in an article published in the *Medical Record*. He says:

"The excess of proteids and extractives contained in flesh foods acts as a stimulus to some reflex nervous machinery through which metabolism of all tissues is hurried on. They stimulate the normally active metabolism of a child and prevent storing of the tissue builders. Over-stimulation of metabolism by an excess of animal food interferes with laying on flesh-fat or muscular flesh.

"Muscles do their work upon carbohydrates. A child, with its unceasing acrobatic, muscular feats, should have an abundance of that food which is regarded as the most valuable source of muscle energy, and the sensitive nervous system should not be stimulated by a nervous food.

"One of the most unfortunate wholly unconsidered ill consequences of an early and liberal meat diet is the disrelish it creates for the physiological foods of childhood—cereals, vegetables, milk. A child that is allowed a generous meat diet is certain to refuse cereals and vegetables. Meat, by its stimulating effect, produces a habit as surely as do alcohol, tea, or coffee, and a distaste for less satisfying foods.

"The food which the meat-eating child rejects contains in large proportions certain mineral constituents which are essential to bodily nutrition and health, and without which the processes of fresh growth and development are stunted.

"The chemical processes in the organism are dependent upon alkaline reacting tissue fluids.

"In the combustion of flesh food (proteids) in the organism sulphuric acid is formed, and death may be caused by a lack of alkaline bases necessary to neutralize this acid product.

"For the processes of fresh growth, for the construction of bone, muscle, etc., mineral constituents are likewise required in large proportions. These are only found in organic combination in sufficient proportions to meet the large demands of a child in certain vegetables and cereals which obtain them direct from the soil as provided by nature.

"The evil fruit of this abnormal feeding is to over-stimulate the delicate nervous organization with undeveloped controlling centres and almost completely developed sympathetic nerves; to tax the system with incompletely burned, merely charred excretory products; to render the urine, which in the young child is highly acid, abnormally so; and in its train incontinence of urine, rheumatism, chorea, rheumatic tonsillitis and torticollis, night terrors, urticaria, angioneurotic oedema, and finally, from poisonous excrementitious products, anemia, acute convulsions, and petit mal.

"The ever-active, muscle-laboring, growing child with its rapid heat-loss should have an abundance of cereals, vegetables, and milk in its diet to meet the physiological requirements.

"Children in whose diet meat is a large factor have not the robustness and vigor, the freedom from attacks of ill-health, witnessed in those who have meat but sparingly. A disproportion of animal food by over-stimulation of metabolism leads to imperfect tissue-nutrition, delicacy of constitution, and irritability and peevishness of disposition; the resisting powers of the organism are impaired and the susceptibility to disease heightened. Meat juice should not be given to a healthy child before two years old, and then in quantities not to exceed half an ounce to one ounce three times a week. The healthiest children are those who have meat every second day only up to the age of five and six years."

INFANT MORTALITY.—The Chicago Clinic, quoting from a paper on "Un-natural Death" read at the recent meeting of the English Sanitary Institute, says: "About one million babies are born annually in England. Thirty thousand of the million die violent deaths from accident, thirty thousand die unnecessarily from tuberculosis, and one hundred and twenty thousand more from absolutely preventable causes, such as small-pox, measles, and scarlet-fever. Only forty-five thousand live their natural lives, and nearly one in twenty die from wearing out. One-fourth of all the diseases which destroy life are absolutely preventable, and fifteen years would at once be added if the practice of hygiene were placed on a level with its theory. Only four and one-half per cent. of the babies born annually live to the end of their allotted three-score years and ten."

SPUTA-CUP FOR CONSUMPTIVE PATIENTS.—Dr. J. O. Cobb, passed assistant surgeon United States Marine Hospital Service, in an article in the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* recommends a sputa-cup for patients who are able to walk about, which he claims has many merits. It is in two parts, can be carried in the pocket without spilling its contents, concealed in a handkerchief when in use, and easily emptied and sterilized in a tin can made for the purpose or by boiling. It is cheap and practically indestructible. It is called the Marine Hospital Service cup.